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DON'T MENTION THE BRIERS.

Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church,
156 Fifth Avenue, New York.

"Don't Mention the Briers."

I read recently of a missionary society which had established a new committee, viz., "On Cheerfulness." It was the duty of its members to bring into the missionary meetings any items of encouragement from the field, or paragraphs with a bit of life or fun in them—"something which will create a smile or provoke a laugh."

I wondered when I read it if we might not advantageously introduce such a committee into other of our societies.

What has been your experience? Have you, as a rule, gone home from your missionary meetings with a heart swelling with joy over the great work being accomplished by our missionaries, with gratitude for the souls brought into the Master's kingdom, for evils overcome, for wrongs righted, and all the glad, joyful news of the day?

Or have you left the meeting burdened, sorrowful, sick at heart over the dreadful degradation of the people and the great needs of the field?

So much to be done and so few workers, so great the need and so little the means at hand! I have sometimes felt we might as well give up the battle, the forces against us were so great and the work *we* could do *so* small.

Let me repeat a little story I found yesterday. It is entitled "Don't Mention the Briers." A man met a little fellow on the road carrying a basket of blackberries, and said to him, "Sammy, where did you get such nice berries?"

"Over there, sir, in the briers."

"Won't your mother be glad to see you come home with a basket of such nice ripe fruit?"

"Yes, sir," said Sammy "She always seems glad when I hold up the berries, and I don't tell her anything about the briers in my feet."

Have we not grown, almost unconsciously, to look at the dark side of mission work, and use that as an incentive to greater zeal and effort? We have held up the briers instead of the berries. We talk over our difficulties in raising money. Mrs. A is not interested at all this year in *this* field and will not contribute Mrs. B 's husband is out of work, so *her* contribution will fail us, and entertainments and suppers are *so much work* How *shall* we raise the money we have pledged? We have looked at our own small end of the work so closely that it has hidden the broad field from view. Let us change this. Let us hold up our berries and forget the briers.

When our boys in blue started from their homes in the North during the late war it was with banners waving, bands playing, and the cheers of the people left behind ringing in their ears. They went gladly, cheerfully, joyfully, to fight the battles of their country for right and freedom. There was another side to the picture, to be sure. Some of you may have realized it personally. There were aching hearts both on the field and in the home; longings for a sight of dear ones; there was trial and tribulation, sorrow and suffering! Yet when the troops were called into battle the men were started by bugle-call, the bands played patriotic airs, and all was as bright and inspiriting as it could be made The sorrows and suffering were not referred to then. The victories were dwelt on—the defeats hidden from view. There was nothing our officers dreaded so much as to have their men become *discouraged* They could not lead a discouraged army to victory.

We women of the home missionary societies are enrolled soldiers for the great war now waging against evil in this our own beloved land, and there is nothing which will so quickly take away our zeal and courage in the battle as to be constantly looking despondently at the dark side of mission and Christian work.

I ask you to cultivate the habit of looking at the other side, the joyful side, the bright side. Have you